



sermon highlights

HOW TO BE BRAVE

WEEK TWO: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD (HOLD THAT THOUGHT)

In week two of *How To Be Brave* Pastor Steven taught us how to hold onto the right thoughts and to take captive the thoughts that attempt to take hold of us.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

[Philippians 4:1, 8-9](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:3-5](#)

[Joshua 1:8-9](#)

FOCUSED FAITH

-Pastor Steven preached that it's not through epic feats of bravery that we make an impact on the world for Christ. It is through long term faithfulness and consistent courage. But how do we find this kind of heroic faith?

-In his letter to the Philippian church, Paul gave them a list of things to think about. He instructed them to think on things that were true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. In order to cultivate heroic faith, we need to form a habit of thinking thoughts that are of God. It's all about forging a courageous state of mind.

-As Pastor Steven explained, both fear and faith are products of focus. When we focus on the wrong things, fear is produced. But when we focus on the right things, faith is produced. Unfocused minds welcome fear and weaken faith.

-In the Garden of Eden, God told Adam he could eat all he wanted of any tree in the garden, except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Things would have been much different if Adam and Eve had focused on what they could eat instead of on what they couldn't. In the same way, instead of focusing on not thinking wrong thoughts, we need to focus on thinking right thoughts. God places no limits on our thoughts that come from Him.

-A lack of faith is a sign of broken focus. Our faith will rise when we concentrate on the goodness of God.

HOLD THAT THOUGHT

-In 2 Corinthians, Paul tells us that we have divine weapons that have the power to destroy every argument and pretension raised against the thoughts of God. He also tells us to take every thought captive to obey Christ.

-So often when God tells us to do something, we have thoughts that tell us why we shouldn't. These are arguments, and we have the power to destroy them. These arguments often present us with facts. But as Pastor preached, "Just because it's a fact, doesn't make it true." We have a truth that is higher than facts. Though it was a fact that Jesus was dead, the truth was that He got up out of the grave. We need to find what is verifiably true by the Word of God.

-We can't always control the thoughts we have, but we can control the thoughts we hold. Some thoughts come from God and some come from the enemy. We need to learn how to hold the thoughts that are true, noble, and excellent.

-God is continually encouraging us, but we get discouraged because we haven't learned to hold that good thought.

INTERROGATE YOUR FEARS

-Many thoughts are dispatched by Satan to terrorize our faith. We are often told to just let such thoughts go, but this isn't very effective. We need to hold these thoughts captive in order to interrogate them and destroy them.

-We need to screen every thought that comes into our minds to find where it came from. If it came from the Enemy, we can interrogate it to find what purpose it was sent for. Thoughts from the enemy can actually give us valuable information when we take them captive and question them. Satan sends thoughts in order to keep us from fulfilling our purpose, so if we interrogate what's intimidating us, we will begin to discover the very reason we were born.

-As Pastor Steven shared, he has a fear of silence and of being alone. But he needs to spend significant time alone and in silence with God in order to preach God's Word. So when the thoughts of fear kick in, he has learned they're actually a sign that what God is about to give him in the secret place of silence is going to be helpful to someone.

-We can interrogate our fears in the same way. If we have a fear of scarcity, it might mean we have a calling of generosity. If we are afraid of embarrassment, it might mean we have an incredible gift to touch other people's lives. Wherever the thoughts from Satan are attacking us shows us where our greatest strengths are.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD

-In Joshua 1, Joshua was about to lead the Israelites in to take the promised land. God told them to be strong and courageous because He would go with them. He also told them to meditate on His Word night and day.

-God said be strong and courageous. Courage takes strength, but often we have no strength because we're exhausted. We need focused thoughts because every thought either pays or costs, and the currency is our energy.

-God told the Israelites to meditate on His Word night and day. Too often we meditate on our misery. We need to learn to meditate on our victory in Christ and on the promises we have in Him. Meditation on God's promises accrues an interest of faith and courage in our lives. All God's promises are ours to have, if we'll just hold them!



sermon discussion

Choose one of the main topics you wish to focus on with your eGroup and use the following questions as a guide to facilitating your discussion.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD

1. #EverydayBrave Challenge: We mailed a set of #EverydayBrave Challenge cards ([You can view them online here](#)) to our eGroups in time for *How to Be Brave*. Using one of the cards, spend some time talking about which #EverydayBrave challenges your eGroup took this week.
2. Read [Philippians 4:1, 8-9](#). What is the difference between focusing on what you *don't* think about and focusing on what you *do* think about?
3. Read [2 Corinthians 10:3-5](#). What does Paul mean by saying, "...the weapon we fight with are not the weapons of the world"? What weapons do we have to fight with every day?

HOLD THAT THOUGHT

4. Pastor Steven preached that we don't have to *hold* every thought that you *have*. When was the last time someone said something offensive to you? How difficult was it to let that thought go?
5. What is the difference between ignoring someone and learning from them? What can we learn from the words we hear from people who aren't necessarily concerned about our best interests?
6. How often do you really think about your thoughts? How do you know if a thought comes from God, from your fears, or from somewhere else altogether?

INTERROGATE YOUR FEARS

7. Pastor Steven preached that our fears are often indicative of where our strengths may lie. Which fear do you resonate with the most, failure, embarrassment, commitment, vulnerability, or loneliness?
8. What is it about these fears that make you so afraid? What makes your fears unique?
9. If our spiritual Enemy uses fear to keep us from realizing our fullest potential in Christ, what do you think he is using your fear to keep you from? What potential strength lies at the bottom of your fears?

CONSISTENT COURAGE

10. Have you ever gotten tired or frustrated with something you've consistently prayed for? What doubts or frustrations made you want to give up on what you were praying to God for? What hope is still there?
11. Zechariah 9:12 commands, "Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope..." In a chapter that prophesies the coming of Jesus as Jerusalem's King, this imagery challenges us to be tied to hope regardless of our circumstance. Instead of running from something you fear, what would it look like to use hope to motivate you to move forward?

ICEBREAKER

To Have and to Hold...That Song! Pastor Steven preached that we can't control every thought we have, but we can control the thoughts we hold. Likewise, we can't control every song we hear, but what if we could control the songs that get stuck in our head? Start your eGroup by asking this question: *If you could choose one song to be stuck in your head forever, what would it be?*

ACTIVITY

#EverydayBrave Encouragement. One of the ways to be #EverydayBrave is to take hold of any encouraging thoughts that come into your mind and share them with whoever may need to hear them. Before your eGroup closes, ask them to spend a minute silently praying to God, asking Him who they can encourage. Then, challenge everyone in your eGroup to immediately text whoever came to their mind with a specific message of encouragement, such as, "Just wanted to let you know that I'm praying for you this week. You're making a difference in more people's lives than you think. Be brave!"